Brett Heinz

In mid-to-early 1980’s, a programming problem was discovered in most of the world’s computers that would cause them to reset the date to “January 1, 1900” on the New Year’s eve of the new millennium. Although this may not seem like a huge problem, many believed the world’s computers may crash or require a reboot rendering them temporarily (and possibly permanently) useless. Among the crashed computers, there would be the systems keeping track of bank money, controlling all international military systems and keeping tabs on transportation such as trains and planes. This scenario, as some might imagine, caused a bit of panic.

The governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and over one hundred other countries began making preparations for the possible fallout following the event titled “Y2K”, including a possible nuclear meltdown. The United States spent an estimated $134,000,000,000 in preparation of the event ($171,000,000,000 today.) A study by Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University found over a third of Americans planned to buy extra food in case of a societal collapse, and over a quarter said they would be taking all or some of their money out of their bank account.

After months of media panic and preparation on the part of both the government and citizens, the date of January 1st finally arrived. The biggest damage United States computers suffered? The Navy’s website displayed the wrong date and 150 slot machines in Delaware stopped working, until they were fixed within several hours.

Once the hurricane of paranoia passed, you might think that we as a nation learned something from the event that the *Wall Street Journal* rightfully labeled the “hoax of the century.” The emphasis in the above sentence falls on “you would think.”

In the past couple years, a new fear has emerged about a new scenario that seems even crazier.

The belief holds that the world will change in a violent way December 21, 2012. Some predict a change in human mentality, some predict the emergence of “super volcanoes,” and, my personal favorite, some believe a fictional planet called “Nibiru” will collide with Earth.

Of course, to make such powerful claims, the believers must have some pretty significant evidence. Well, believers cite the ancient civilization of the Mayans, who have a calendar that supposedly ends on said date. Of course, if people investigated the matter themselves, they would realize that Mayan calendar *doesn’t actually end*. It’s a circle, meaning that it needs to be reset every 5,000 years or so. Also, the unknown event is supposed to happen at 11:11 GMT (Greenwich Mean Time,) meaning it will happen time zone by time zone, starting in Hawaii and steadily moving East throughout the day.

Of course, as with all other online conspiracies, after a few facts are found, true believers begin to search for more of it where there isn’t any. There’s the supposed “perfect alignment of the planets,” which has been a favorite omen of “prophets” everywhere for years now; the Book of Revelations, which said the end times are near *1,900 years ago;* and a prediction made by the founder of Mormonism, the same religion that claimed a new city of Jerusalem would fall from heaven and land on the town of Independence, Missouri in the year 2000.

In fact, the world will not be ending in 2012. This is just another one of the *61 separate* *dates* that the world has supposed to end on in the last twenty years, including those predicted by everyone from Isaac Newton to the Heaven’s Gate Cult that claimed an alien spaceship was directly behind a passing-by comet, and if you believe any of them, I have a bridge in Brooklyn you might be interested in buying.